

REMARKS

This response is submitted in response to an Office Action mailed on March 8, 2007 (Notice that Reply filed November 27 was not fully responsive to the Office Action dated August 29, 2006).

Claims 1-69 were pending at the time the Office Action was issued, with claims 23-69 having previously been withdrawn from consideration. The August 29, 2006 Office Action, however, noted that claims 23-67 previously were withdrawn. Applicants have amended claims 1 and 3. No claims have been canceled, nor have any further claims been withdrawn. Thus, Claims 1-22 are presented for reconsideration.

In the Office Action dated August 29, 2006, claim 3 was objected to; claims 1-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; claims 1-5, 11-13, 16, and 18-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e); and claims 6-10 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) (two different rejections). Claims 15 and 17 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Applicants request reconsideration of the objections and rejections set for the in the Office Action.

Claim Objection

In the Office Action dated August 29, 2006, claim 3 was objected to for failing to further limit the subject matter of the previous claim. Claim 3 has been amended to further limit the subject matter of claim 1 from which claim 3 directly depends. Therefore, Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection of claim 3.

35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

In the Office Action dated August 29, 2006, claims 1-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the August 29, 2006 Office Action asserted that the phrase “configured to be at least partially supported” recited in claim 1 was not clear. Applicants have amended claim 1 so that claims 1-22 particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Accordingly, Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

35 U.S.C. §§ 102(e) and 103(a)

In the Office Action dated August 29, 2006, claims 1-5, 11-13, 16, and 18-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 120(e) as being anticipated by Trapp et al. (US 2006/0102689, “Trapp”). Claims 6-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Trapp in view of Alber (US 2004/0120783). Claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Trapp in view of Vierstraete (US 4,304,512).

Respectfully, applicants traverse the rejections, and submit that the claims are allowable over the references cited for the reasons explained in detail below.

Trapp

Trapp was published as a Patent Application Publication on May 18, 2006. The publication date for Trapp is after the October 31, 2003 filing date of the present application. Trapp claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application 60/462, 007 filed on April 11, 2003. Consequently, Trapp’s earliest possible prior art

effective date for 35 U.S.C. §§102(a), 102(e), and 103(a) is April 11, 2003. Therefore, Trapp may be removed by a declaration under 37 C.F.R. §1.131.

Enclosed with the Response filed November 27, 2006 was a Declaration of Inventors under 37 C.F.R. §1.131 that removed Trapp as a prior art reference. Since all the prior art rejections of claims 1-22 required Trapp, all the rejections are rendered moot by the removal of Trapp as a prior art reference. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-5, 11-13, 16, and 18-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 120(e) and the rejections of claims 6-10 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) (two different rejections).

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1-22 are in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendment, as well as consideration and prompt allowance of the claims. If any issue remains unresolved that would prevent allowance of this case, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney to resolve the issue.

Respectfully Submitted,

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By: _____

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